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FOLLOW-UP TO THE UNITED NATIONS REFORM

EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR: TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY TO THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/12 B, the operational and capacity-building responsibilities hitherto discharged by the Disaster Mitigation Branch (DMB) and the Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) have been integrated within the Disaster Management Programme (DMP) situated within the Emergency Response Division of the Operational Support Group of UNDP. The Administrator wishes to advise the Executive Board of the steps that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken in responding to General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. The present report indicates that the Disaster Management Programme (DMP) will address the protection of development gains and reduction of human and economic impacts of disasters through the capacitation and support of appropriate national government authorities and non-governmental institutions in disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness. DMP will also, through the resident coordinator system, strengthen linkages between national actors and the United Nations system and its many partners in the international development community.

II. THE ROLE OF UNDP IN DISASTER PREVENTION, MITIGATION AND PREPAREDNESS

2. Disaster management involves mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities. Disaster management thus cuts squarely across the agendas of both humanitarian and development communities. Since disaster response (i.e., "emergency management") remains a responsibility of the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), it is incumbent upon DMP, in fulfilling its capacity-building functions, to develop and maintain close synergies with the disaster-response community.

3. General Assembly resolution 52/12 B has significantly strengthened the ability of UNDP to harness and coordinate the contributions of the development community. A more focused and integrated approach to national capacitation in disaster management is now expected. The resolution further strengthens the ability of resident coordinators to exercise their responsibility, through the in-country inter-agency Disaster Management Teams, in coordinating the preparedness of the United Nations system for disasters and its response to them.

4. UNDP is committed to capacity-building efforts to reduce the risk of natural, environmental and technological hazards. For example:

(a) In the past, Special Programme Resources were specifically targeted to address such needs;

(b) Currently, resources from the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) 1.1.3 Category III (ii) are available for this purpose;

(c) More significantly, UNDP provides annually, through its core programme resources, substantial inputs for a range of programmes and projects which,

while clearly addressing disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness needs, are not necessarily labelled "disaster-management" activities;

(d) The professional capacity being acquired in DMP will be an additional resource available to UNDP to support and strengthen the regional bureaux in addressing the needs of disaster-prone States in an effective and timely manner.

III. THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

5. The overarching goals of DMP are the reduction of societal and economic vulnerability to disasters; the reduction in loss of lives and in losses to livelihoods due to disasters; and the protection of development gains and the consolidation of sustainable human development.

6. The DMP objectives are the promotion and support of capacitation and the strengthening of appropriate national authorities and non-governmental institutions in the mitigation, prevention and preparedness for disasters. DMP also has the task of strengthening linkages between the national actors and the United Nations system and its many partners in the international development community.

7. These objectives are being addressed both through supporting country office interventions in national capacity-building, and in coordinating activities for disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness with its partner agencies and institutions and the bilateral development assistance community.

8. The DMP objectives and the programme strategy are fully in keeping with the UNDP guiding principles of ensuring that development objectives are advanced in a manner that is sustainable and that makes maximum use of the resources available to its programme country partners. Moreover, DMP believes that building effective disaster-management capacity is an essential ingredient of good governance.

9. In meeting these objectives, DMP will also be in a position to assume any prospective successor arrangements to the IDNDR at the end of the decade.

IV. THE LOCATION OF THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

10. DMP has been established as a continuing UNDP programme, subject thereby, to regular monitoring and evaluation. Located within the Emergency Response Division under the ambit of the Operations Support Group, DMP is based in the UNDP Liaison Office in Geneva.

11. The major considerations in selecting the Geneva base for DMP were the advantages of proximity to the principle disaster-response entities of the United Nations system and associated agencies and institutions. In particular, the interaction and synergies between the relief and development communities will be facilitated by this proximity.

V. STAFFING

12. A complement of five internationally recruited and three locally recruited staff members is required to address existing and anticipated programming needs over the next 18 months. In addition, two internationally recruited and one locally recruited staff member are required for DMTP activities.

VI. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

13. Resources for capacity-building programmes are available to DMP from several sources, including core resources contained in TRAC 1.1.3 Category III (ii) and other TRAC resources programmed directly by country offices. Trust fund resources have also been transferred from OCHA.

14. The resources required to cover the establishment of DMP and to sustain its staffing and operational costs has been addressed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/12 B, in which it determined that "resources for this task will be separate and additional to the resources of the United Nations Development Programme for development activities and will be provided by a grant from the regular budget of the United Nations for the biennium 1998-1999". DMTP posts will be funded, as in the past, from extrabudgetary resources.

15. It is expected that the disaster-mitigation functions assigned by the General Assembly to UNDP will be ongoing. UNDP therefore expects that grants of similar magnitude in support of UNDP fulfilling these functions on behalf of the United Nations system will be provided by the United Nations in its subsequent biennial budgets.

16. Failing the provision of further grants to UNDP from the United Nations regular budget to meet the cost of sustaining DMP, resource mobilization for this purpose through extrabudgetary contributions to UNDP can be accepted by UNDP only if such resources are clearly defined additionalities to UNDP overall core resources. UNDP is not, and will not in the future, be in a position to allocate any core resources for the administrative support of DMP.

VII. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

17. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the present report.